Categories created by the merchant through this method are made available (e.g., presented as hyperlinks on a "categories" page) to all customers of the merchant, while categories created by customers are made available as personal categories for the respective customers (e.g., presented as additional hyperlinks on the categories page). An "active quote" feature allows the customer to view and modify quantities of items selected for prospective purchase throughout the various browsing or viewing modes. Specifically, regardless of the browsing mode (alphabetic browsing, category-based browsing, search, etc.), whenever the user views an item or a list of items, each such item is displayed in conjunction with a "quantity" field which indicates the number of that item currently selected for purchase. Thus, when the user views an item, the user can immediately determine whether the item is selected for purchase (and its quantity) without having to access a shopping cart page or other special page. A message audit trail feature allows a customer and a merchant to send messages to one another that are linked to a particular order, and to view an order-specific log of such messages.--

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: 6 - 30 - 00

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